



Minutes

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| Meeting | Ipswich Vision Board |
| Date | Friday 15 th September 2023 |
| Time | 09:00 hrs |
| Location | Orwell Room, Grafton House |
| Present | David Ralph, Chair of Ipswich Vision Board (Chair) Helen Pluck, CEO, IBC Dr Dan Poulter, MP for Central Suffolk & North Ipswich (DP) Elaine Joseland, Chief of Staff for Dr Dan Poulter MP (EJ) James Davey, Director, Ipswich Small Business Association (JDa) Becca Jackaman, (BJ) Emily Cashen, DLUHC (EC) John Dugmore, Chamber of Commerce (JD) Tom Hunt, MP for Ipswich (TH) Ellie Munroe, Member of staff for Tom Hunt MP (EM) Julian Munson, New Anglia LEP (JM) Sophie Alexander-Parker, Ipswich Central (SAP) Paul West, Councillor, SCC (PW) Neil McDonald, Leader of IBC (NMcd) Tim Greenacre, University of Suffolk (TG) Stuart McDonald, Interim Assistant Director of Place, IBC (SMc) Sarah Down, IBC (Minutes) |

Items:

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| 1.0 | Apologies: Helen Langton, Vice Chancellor, University of Suffolk (HL) CJ Green, Chair, New Anglia LEP (CJG) Rosanne Wijnberg, New Anglia LEP (RW) Terry Baxter, Chair of Ipswich Central (TB) Andrew Cook, Executive Director for Growth, Highways & Infrastructure, SCC (AC) Emma Lindsell, Head of Towns Fund & Economic Development IBC (EL) | |

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| 2.0 | <p>Minutes of the meeting held on 9th June 2023:</p> <p>The Minutes were accepted as an accurate record.</p> | |
| 3.0 | <p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>Chair noted two carry forwards:</p> <p>Helen Langton had agreed to circulate some photos at last meeting. Chair asked University to provide a presentation at the next meeting.</p> <p>Biographies –outstanding biographies now received and passed to IBC’s Comms Team for uploading on web page.</p> <p>Broomhill Lido:</p> <p>PW asked if Fusion are re-applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund.</p> <p>HP confirmed but noted it is taking a long time</p> <p>JDa asked if KLH are the architects on Broomhill Lido; HP confirmed.</p> | HL/TG |
| 4.0 | <p>Ipswich Vision Board Governance Review (P12 – 28)</p> <p>Chair noted the update to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised Terms of Reference for the Board. <p>Chair thanked EC’s team and board members for getting governance updated.</p> <p>Chair noted he wants to make sure all parties understand the role of Board and Town Deal oversight, meaning 6 monthly monitoring. If there are significant changes to projects, there has to be a sign-off mechanism. He raised the following 3 points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussion about sub groups – 4 are needed (Connected Town, Destination, Waterfront, City Status); 2. Documents refer to a Vision Co-ordinator – Chair recommended this as helpful to the Board; 3. Board membership – Chair suggested a review of the current Board, to ensure appropriate representation is given. For example Suffolk New College and Health Partners. | |

EC noted a revised version of report was sent round this week, to make sure the text reflects Government requirements, i.e. where Board has a decision- making role and an advisory function, to make sure this is clearly recorded.

Also to clarify their role for project adjustment requests, to make sure they are signed off and approved and the oversight role re: 6 monthly returns, as from experience of working with other Councils, there can be confusion in the delivery phase.

Chair confirmed that if we sign this off, Government will be satisfied we have met requirements.

- Sub-groups of the board (Connected Town, Destination, Waterfront, City Status):

Chair clarified that the proposal is that members of group will lead the relevant sub-group.

HP noted discussions with partners had been taking place to decide on the sub-groups, adding that membership should not be restricted to the organisations round the table and we could bring in more companies.

It was suggested that:

- Ipswich Central to lead on the Connected Town and to review membership of the wider group;
- Chamber of Commerce to lead on Destination/Investment;
- University to lead on Waterfront Destination;
- City Status would be led by the 2 local authorities.

HP noted she has been approached by Gina Long (fund raiser) interested in helping Ipswich achieve city status.

JDa asked if Heritage had been dropped; Chair noted Destination sub-group could cover Heritage.

TH noted that when he talks to Ipswich people, nobody mentions heritage but there is a lot of concern about anti-social behaviour, so we need to change perceptions, adding it needs to be part of the Vision Board discussions.

Chair agreed the starting point needs to be a safe town centre and it should be part of the Destination sub-group discussion.

He added the view of Board last time was that other bodies are dealing with this, i.e. Police Commissioner, Local Authorities,

etc. so we should invite them to attend a meeting to provide a presentation. He added the Towns Deal should start to deliver itself soon.

TH noted the vision piece is how this group can add value.

Chair noted there will be cross-overs and the four sub groups will need to make sure the four respective Chairs communicate well with each other.

JDa noted negative content on social media i.e. people don't feel safe, also xenophobic comments and the perception is that City Status is a vanity project for IBC, so this perception needs to be changed.

Chair noted good communication and coverage will help to address some of this.

TH added whatever city/town you visit, people have bad impression and focus on the negatives, however, he is alarmed by extent of negativity about Ipswich TC, as it is much worse than before.

JDa noted he was impressed by CK's coverage on building new projects etc.

Chair added we have an opportunity to promote our strengths, need to do better and focus on work that is progressing.

HP agrees it is a valid point and is working with SAP on various issues, including:

- A Towns Deal communication strategy, to go out on a consistent basis, to show that positive investment and progress is being made.
- Communications Teams across partnership are working on 1,000 Positive Things campaign, regularly sending out positive messages to get into people's consciousness. Needs to be backed up by action.

HP added that the town centre is a big issue but we have £8m from the Regeneration Fund to kickstart some of this work IBC is also working on delivering a Cornhill strategy, so are very active behind the scenes.

PW noted that the bridging gap is difficult, adding that elected members should express concerns and promote the positive things we are doing. Every town and city faces the same challenges, so we need to be factual about outcomes.

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| <p>JM asked where positive campaign and celebration sits re: Cornhill activity.</p> <p>HP noted IBC is trying to bring art partners in so they treat Cornhill as a space they can use, without events having to be initiated by IBC.</p> <p>Chair noted re: JM's point, a lot has been going on in town over the summer months and it was well received, adding the We Are Ipswich group said they want to maximise use of Cornhill as a space.</p> <p>SAP noted there is work going on currently between TC Arts Council and Heritage and asked of this is something they can combine annually.</p> <p>Chair agreed we need to increase footfall into TC.</p> <p>TH noted the success of Ipswich Town FC is helping create a buzz in town and thinks it presents an opportunity to get increased footfall, encourage people to stay weekend in Ipswich and to have a knock on effect on spending in TC.</p> <p>TH added the cricket world cup is approaching and requested consideration be given to a big screen in TC for some of the matches. SAP agreed to investigate the possibility.</p> <p>SAP noted that any event we put on in TC is increasing footfall by 28%, so it has a really good impact; therefore by increasing investment we should be able to raise it further.</p> <p>SAP added that the SPILL festival will take place in October.</p> <p>SAP and HP agreed to look into the Comms further and SAP will send something round to the group.</p> <p>Chair suggested ITFC should be on Board as he recognises their ambition and asked for any objections to the idea; None received.</p> <p>SAP noted there were no companies on board representing health or culture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process for the £6m claim sign off: <p>Chair asked for any comments:</p> <p>TG – reported that HL is not 100% happy with Operations Group existing and not convinced its needed.</p> | <p>SAP & HP</p> <p>HP</p> |
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| | <p>Chair noted it was not part of Govt framework and thinks necessary that officers ensure the work is picked up, and suggested they meet between board meetings to make sure things get done.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership Review & Skills Audit: <p>JM noted there needs to be a transition from LEP, as they are the fund holder, adding that RW was pushing for a decision by December. HP committed to resolving this with SCC and LEP.</p> <p>Chair asked if any changes in Govt policy were due – None.</p> | |
| <p>5.0</p> | <p>Visioning:</p> <p>An update from the Chair on the development of a Vision for Ipswich:</p> <p>Four groups to get together to discuss what they can achieve within time- scales.</p> <p>Two parts discussed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To employ a coordinator of vision piece – requires funding. 2. External facilitator to help bring vision to life – again, requires funding. <p>Need to get working groups giving feedback as lots of strategies are being discussed.</p> <p>At the next meeting they would need to discuss how it will be paid for. Asked if people were happy with this to be left to a future meeting.</p> <p>JD noted he thinks the vision is there but it needs to be acted upon and that there should be enough resourcing in place already.</p> <p>Chair felt to make it happen it will require more resources, but the first aim is to get the 4 sub-groups up and running.</p> <p>TH felt all the relevant points had already been discussed.</p> <p>Chair noted he is waiting for the Comms Plan to come back, then more decisions will be made on Visioning.</p> <p>Chair added it was necessary to set out clearly to communities the direction we want to go in.</p> | |
| <p>6.0</p> | <p>Connected Town Update:</p> | |

Sub-Group Update:

SAP noted the Membership Terms of Reference are agreed.

NPO's and Arts Cultural Heritage: achievements can be good if we bring them together.

Chair added there needs to be a coordinated approach on transport, infrastructure, provision of police, lighting, housing supply, needs of young people and it needs a strategy with a coordinated approach around perception.

He added it was necessary to decide who is responsible, then they could progress the direction of the meeting.

Chair noted he is not clear on the staging of the critical path and performance indicators will be needed to check progress.

SAP agreed, noting it starts with perception and in terms of understanding how we are progressing to a more connected TC, it needs to be done through research and consultation.

The Board agreed on the four pillars to focus on.

SAP added it will come down to priorities and aligning with IBC's strategy on the TC.

DP noted the Transport Task Force paper was published recently and as a lot of work had already been done, asked SAP if they could use the work that was already done. SAP agreed.

Chair noted the clear recommendations in the Transport Task Force Group, adding they would need to see where they could be implemented.

DP felt it should be used as a baseline for any further work done on that subject.

PW added he will commit to providing feedback on the consultation, and what Govt funds have been received in meantime to allow us to proceed; he said he will publish it within the next few weeks.

Chair asked Connected Town to provide summary at next meeting showing their Strategy.

JDa asked about '15 Minute Town' and reported that the public thinks this is trying to stop them moving 15 minutes further than where they live.

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| | <p>SAP explained it is aimed at providing public with everything they need within a short distance of their homes, adding she takes it on board and realised there will always be an element of conspiracy theorists.</p> <p>TH added it seems to have had a negative impact, and people are not clear on what it means, so it does need to be clarified.</p> <p>Chair noted communication needs to be improved on this '15 minute Town' initiative.</p> <p>PW added he had received phone calls from residents re: 15 minute town and explained the aim is to provide more local services and more choice to people.</p> <p>TH felt it is about giving people positive incentives to leave their cars at home and walk or cycle to nearby facilities.</p> | |
| <p>7.0</p> | <p>Towns Fund Update:</p> <p>SMc informed that since the last meeting, all Business Cases have been signed off; he thanked the partners around the room for their support in getting them over the line.</p> <p>SMc informed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EL is now Head of Towns Fund and Economic Development and IBC has also recruited a Programme manager and two Project Officers working on TF. • There had been good progress on local shopping parades. 13 grant agreements had been agreed for the Community Facilities fund and a recommendation with go to IBC's Executive in October, in relation to the Phase 1 funding. • Re: Paul's Silo, IBC now has a specialist retail agent and architect appointed and designs are expected in November. SMc agreed to review Communications to make the public aware of the project. • The Public Realm and Greener Ipswich Projects are progressing and appointments on landscape architects will be made in October/November. • There are two 'at risk' projects: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yacht building academy: this is budget-related and there is a meeting later this month to look at the funding gap. 2. Bridge project: IBC continues discussion with SCC and ABP on this project to determine who will lead the construction of the bridge. | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re: Digital Project, IBC is working with Ipswich Central and there has been good progress with Project Board, report to go to Executive in October. • Regeneration Fund: there is a high-level delivery plan which was presented to IBC colleagues, including The Leader this week. As part of this Short term pop-ups format is being promoted to get buildings back in to use ASAP; <p>TH noted there had been good progress and the information was concise.</p> <p>He added as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local shopping parades: Phase 1 – request to arrange publicity. • Pauls Silo – as mentioned above to promote plans to the public to gain support. • Yacht Academy – he has concerns about the funding gap as it has a great heritage element and it would be a big shame to see it fall away, so is very keen for us to do everything we can to get it across the line. TH asked to be informed what shortfall is when known, as he would try and raise the missing funds. <p>Chair summed up noting the two Red Risk Projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spirit Yachts: problem is the funding gap and subsidy control, so it is either seen as public investment or not. He asked if we need to have a progress update so we can keep supporting the project. • Bridge: same issues resurfacing: he asked if the issues can be resolved. <p>SMc noted he thinks it is possible as IBC, ABP and SCC are working to agree a Project lead.</p> <p>PW added he will talk to AC to get an update from SCC and would provide the Board with an update.</p> <p>Chair asked SMc and PW to provide an update between meetings.</p> <p>SMc clarified that no specific properties have been identified for the Regeneration fund at this stage.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> | <p>SMc</p> <p>PW</p> <p>SMc & PW</p> |
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DP noted the report was up-to-date and that the Towns and Regeneration funding has been secured and allocated to projects, adding he will be having meetings on it next week.

M&E Group - Procurement Strategy:

Chair noted we want to show good practice and support local content.

DP noted that at the last Board Meeting, the Task Force was tasked with various points.

DP set out proposals for a target set to a minimum of 75% local companies to be used for Towns Deal projects and the cost of external advisors to advise on procurement to be authorised by Towns Deal Board.

DP had been waiting from IBC's proposal and now received it.

The recommendation is for IBC to bring forward their recommendations to the Board.

Chair agreed to look at the paper and try to reach agreement between us.

He agreed we should set a target for local content but was not sure if 75% is realistic.

DP noted some procurement would need to be more specialist.

Chair asked the Board whether they thought it helpful to set a target on local procurement.

NMcD asked how you would judge it?

Chair thinks it is good to have a target, but it should be worded as 'highest possible local content with the aim to reach 75%'.

JD noted it should be an ambition, not a mandatory, and that it was important to have strong evidence that the Board have tried to use local companies, and to be able to back it up with good reasoning if it was not possible.

JM noted definition of local needs to be clarified and asked what the definition would be.

DP noted that IP postcodes were the simplest way of extracting data.

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| <p>HP said she would support having a framework in place for each item that needs to be procured, so we can check if there are local suppliers and once an exhaustive search has been done, contact local suppliers to let them know so they can apply to bid and get registered with IBC.</p> <p>HP added the majority of procurement results are through local supply but is concerned with having a fixed target as it might not always be feasible to award within the local economy. HP noted it can be discussed at M& E Group next week.</p> <p>DP added more medium sized companies should be used for government contracts and putting in a realistic ambition does help to raise efforts. However, he understands that specialist national companies would be required for bigger projects. DP felt they were more likely to get better quality from local suppliers as they have a vested interest.</p> <p>Chair noted there was a lot of support from Board on having local content but felt it should be up to IBC to say what is reasonable.</p> <p>SAP noted the quality of the delivery of projects is really important, now we are at delivery point and felt they should be focusing on that. SAP added they had not yet discussed quality and some projects could be at risk because we behind.</p> <p>Chair summarised that they need to set a standard that we are keen to maximise local content and need to be able to show Central Govt in future where money was spent and that local companies were used.</p> <p>DP suggested getting some external support about revising the IBC procurement framework to see how it can best work for this programme.</p> <p>Chair agreed we could get some external legal procurement advice in to get framework checked.</p> <p>HP added the Towns Deal money is capital and legal advice is not allowed to be capitalized. EC confirmed this adding she would look into it.</p> <p>Chair noted IBC would need to review DP's recommendations and revert.</p> <p>DP said his office will book some meetings for September and October to reach an agreement and a recommendation would be sent out by late October.</p> | <p>Chair</p> |
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| | <p>DP raised the third issue on apportionment of funding and asked if there should be a meeting in between now and the next IVB Board Meeting.</p> <p>Chair to decide and make an announcement.</p> | |
| <p>8.0</p> | <p>Any other Business:</p> <p>TH raised the following three points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neptune Marina: ABP's plans for yachts to be relocated has caused concerns as it would take away from Waterfront experience; he is discussing with ABP about keeping some of the yachts there. • River Gipping: this river needs to be cleaned up and has heard ideas for regeneration with paddle boarding, etc. <p>SMc added IBC are setting up a meeting with partners and stakeholders (River Gipping Group), so progress is being made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broomhill: asked if further application was sent to Heritage Lottery Fund for uplift for funding; HP confirmed, adding Fusion has to carry out additional surveys. TH asked for the bid to go in ASAP as he is convinced we can bring it together and the public support it. HP confirmed a further bid was being submitted and IBC was pushing Fusion as hard as possible for progress at pace | |
| <p>9.0</p> | <p>Date, Time and Location of future meetings:</p> <p>To note the previously agreed date of:</p> <p>(i) 8th December 2023.</p> <p>To determine the start time and location of each meeting.</p> | |

| RAG | Project | Update since last report (Sept – Dec 23) | Decision | Risks / Issues | TF Budget | Spend to 29.11.23 | Income to 29.11.23 | Onsite / Visible start date | Completion date |
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| G | Shopping Parades | <p><u>Progress</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive report approved spend on the project October 23 Group 1 parades programme (primary parades) agreed with project board - delivery of quick wins e.g. bins underway Group 2 parades site visits and business engagement with ward councillors undertaken. Expression of interest process launched and closes 04.12.23 13 Communities facilities grants agreed – first payments made. <p><u>Next steps</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Group 2 submissions and costing proposals Project group decision about Group 2 packages Shopfront improvements - expression of interest launched Nov 23 with closing date Jan 24 | Note Progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced intervention level may not make enough impact in shopping parades to improve viability Unadopted land around shops e.g. Ellenbrook Green may mean issues cannot be resolved quickly/by Mar 26 ASB is identified as a key issue - working with the community safety teams to ensure the programme designs out crime as much as possible | 2,810,000 | 750 | 2,510,750 | Jan 24 | Mar-26 |
| A | Pauls Silo | <p><u>Progress</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial internal drawings received from architect Specialist leisure advisor initial report on mix of uses received and under review – additional information sourced to support a decision as to mix of uses Site visit with all contractors undertaken to share understanding of scale and opportunity <p><u>Next steps</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further assessment of leisure advisors recommendations to inform designs Drawings for review by stakeholders March 24 Outline planning decision – March 24 Explore additional funding sources – Jan – March 24 | Note Progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budgets unable to realise scale of vision and ambition Value engineering to meet budget envelope and construction inflation inadvertently weakens the scheme | 3,750,000 | 126,043 | 662,500 | Jun-25 | Mar-26 |
| A | Public Realm & | <p>Public Realm</p> <p><u>Progress</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenders received for lead architect – assessment and appointment complete Dec 23. 4 tenders received - 2 local. Initial engagement with taxis re potential changes to taxi rank <p><u>Next steps</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial designs expected Jan 24 Review with stakeholders March 24 Detailed engagement with taxis from Jan 24 | Note Progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full scale of ambition is unaffordable Scheme does not meet needs of businesses or residents - significant early engagement underway | 1,400,000 | 0 | 70,000 | tbc | March 26 |
| A | Greening | <p>Greening</p> <p><u>Progress</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement process complete - Makehappen landscape architect appointed <p><u>Next steps</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Board inception meeting with architect to confirm scope and ambition Dec 23 Engagement with businesses and BID on design and maintenance from Jan 24 | Note Progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full scale of ambition is unaffordable - to be established following design work Volunteers to maintain planting cannot be found IBC may have to maintain planting | 560,000 | 80,061 | 455,500 | 2022 | tbc |

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| R | Yacht Building Academy | <p><u>Progress</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Board meetings held in September and November Apprenticeship model discounted as an option. Current proposals are for a fee-paying model, however there is significant revenue funding viability gap. Trusts and foundations identified that could support the project but it needs to be further along in design before applications can be made. IBC secured £30k through sponsorship towards the capital funding gap. Identification of a new site for delivery has been mooted as a means to address the capital funding cap – all partners considering options on their estate. <p><u>Next steps:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project board members identifying new sites that will be offered on a peppercorn rent basis Awaiting outcome of letter from Tom Hunt MP to DLUHC Next project board Jan 24 | See agenda pack for detailed update report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital funding gap in excess of £1.5m, no private sector match has been identified Suitable and sustainable academic delivery and funding model not yet confirmed Subsidy control - tests to be met | 1,120,000 | 37,371 | 341,000 | tbc | tbc |
| R | Pedestrian Bridge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCC has agreed to lead delivery Discussion about the wider Island site development and access issues taking place between all partners; the bridge to be considered as part of these wider issues <p><u>Next steps:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ABP, SCC and IBC meeting to discuss project timing | Note Progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timing of the wider Island site redevelopment may impact on the delivery of the bridge – to be kept under review | 1,310,000 Match funding tbc | 0 | 687,750 | tbc | tbc |
| G | Digital Town Centre | <p><u>Progress</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive approved delivery of three strands Discussions ongoing with JCDecaux around partnering to display content on their installations. BT no longer engaging. Positive planning and conservation discussion around placement of screens and binoculars Public call for ideas about AR trails launched Nov 23 All About Ipswich website upgrade provider selected. Funding agreement with Ipswich Central in draft. Options for securing advertising revenue from IBC screens being considered. Income to be ringfenced to off-set revenue pressures created by Towns Fund delivery <p><u>Next steps</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First AR trail to test concepts and tech launched Dec 23 “You said: We did” response to call for AR ideas Procurement / sourcing for infrastructure – screens / binoculars from Jan 23 | Note Progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning & conservation considerations for physical installations Procurement delays due to specialist nature of infrastructure | 2,590,000 | 7,125 | 440,000 | tbc | Mar-26 |
| A/R | Town Centre Regeneration Fund | <p><u>Progress</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive agreed delivery model October 23 Engagement session with agents, planning consultants and architects 21.11.23 – fund well received and attendees keen to work with the council to bring forward projects IBC continuing to explore sites for the council as developer strand Interest from owner in taking part in Innovative Actions strand <p><u>Next steps</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project board meeting – Jan 24 Call for proposals for Stalled Developments and Innovative Actions launched - Jan 23 | Note Progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost inflation - fewer projects than projected Market unresponsive Unable to generate return income to create a revolving investment fund | 7,958,150 | 1,850 | 5,110,000 | tbc | tbc |

PROJECTS COMPLETE SUMMER 23

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| G | Tech Campus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works complete • Financial closedown summer 23 • Proposed comms around impact of project e.g. case studies and human interest element - changing lives | None | Outputs and outcome reporting may drop away - need to ensure that full M&E reporting continues | 940,000 | 940,000 | 940,000 | Complete | Complete |
| G | Old Post Office | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works complete • Financial closedown summer 23 • Proposed comms around impact of project e.g. jobs created, promotions, visitor numbers etc. | None | Outputs and outcome reporting may drop away - need to ensure that full M&E reporting continues | 1,230,000 | 230,000 | 230,000 | Complete | Complete |
| G | Integrated Care Academy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works complete • Financial closedown autumn 23 • Proposed comms around impact of project e.g. case studies and human interest element - changing lives | None | Outputs and outcome reporting may drop away - need to ensure that full M&E reporting continues | 2,580,000 | Payment imminent | 2,580,000 | Complete | Complete pending payment |

7b. Yacht Building Academy Update

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to update the Board on the work that the project board has been undertaking since the summer to bring the Yacht Building Academy towards delivery. The project has been reported as being a red risk for the last few meetings.

Summary

The project board has identified two major issues:

- Capital funding gap of £1.5m - £2m
- Financial viability of the academic model

£30k sponsorship has been identified by Ipswich Borough Council (IBC) towards capital costs. No further funding has currently been identified.

Apprenticeship delivery has been discounted as an option for the academic model. A fee charging model for degrees and postgraduate degrees is currently under consideration. As modelled, the number of expected students mapped against costs (tutors, administration, materials etc.) means that costs outweigh income by some margin. The University of Suffolk (UoS) is considering options to reduce this revenue viability gap.

The project board will continue to meet and address these two key issues over the coming months.

A further report on the viability of the project will be prepared for the March Town Deal / Vision Board meeting. If the funding and viability gaps have been addressed to the Board's satisfaction the project will proceed into design and delivery. However, if either funding gap remains the following options could be considered:

- Reallocation of funds to another project(s) in the current Towns Fund programme, subject to a Project Adjustment Request to Department of Levelling-Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC)
- Return funds to DLUHC
- Extend the deadline for the Yacht Academy Project Board to develop viable proposals.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Town Deal / Vision Board:

1. Note the work that the project board has undertaken to address the identified issues
2. Take a decision at the next meeting (March 24) as to whether the project board has made sufficient progress in addressing the capital funding gap and academic viability gap to allow it to proceed
3. Note and discuss the potential options should the Yacht Academy prove to not be financially viable.

Introduction

The Yacht Building Academy Business Case was approved in March 2023. The project will create a yacht building academy at Public Warehouse No 1 which will deliver degree level and postgraduate courses resulting in qualifications supporting the traditional and modern yacht building industry.

The model in the business case agreed by DLUHC is as set out in the bullets below:

- The project is the design, procurement and construction of a yacht building academy with space to build 30ft yachts on the ground floor of Public Warehouse No1, with administrative and welfare space provisions. The first-floor space will remain open plan and be used for rigging, sail making with the potential to be used out of hours as a congregation/social venue.
- Associated British Ports (ABP) will lease Public Warehouse No 1 to Ipswich Borough Council (IBC); the lease will be on a peppercorn rent with terms to be agreed between IBC and ABP.
- The building will be designed and built by IBC for a not-for-profit company with the part of the cost of the project being supported by IBC via the Towns Deal Fund to the sum of £1.12m, with £1.347m private match funding being contributed by Spirit Yachts (total project cost = £2.467m). Any additional expenses will be borne by Spirit Yachts (SY) and repaid over the term of the sub-lease.
- The Borough Council will procure and then deliver via a contractor(s) - the refurbishment of the building using the Town Deal and match funding.
- A not-for-profit company will be formed by SY to sub-lease the building from IBC once the construction works are completed. The sub-lease will be on a peppercorn rent with terms to be agreed between IBC and SY.
- The academic model was not fully defined in the business case aside from the creation of the not for profit company.

The outcomes for the project are 216 degree level learners trained, 40 6-month courses and 144 short courses delivered, and the creation of 2 new jobs.

Initial architects drawings for the site were prepared and costed in February '23. The redevelopment of the ground floor only, making the upper safe, will cost at least £2.567m (this is likely to be closer to £3m given cost inflation). Completion of the whole building will cost at least £3.765m (this is likely to be over £4m given cost inflation). The funding gap is therefore £1.5 - £2m.

A project group comprising IBC, ABP, SY, the UoS and Suffolk New College (SNC) has been meeting since July '23 to bring the project into delivery. The challenges facing the group include:

- Bridging the capital funding gap
- Identifying a viable academic model

Progress in Addressing the Capital Funding Gap

SY has confirmed that it only requires the ground floor space in Public Warehouse No1; this limits the funding gap to £1.5 - £2m.

The project board has identified £30k towards the funding gap - IBC has secured sponsorship from a local trust towards the project. Other actions that the group has undertaken include:

- UoS has identified a number of trusts and foundations that may be possible funders but the project needs to be more advanced for them to consider an approach. They have also approached a number of contacts about sponsorship for the project
- Spirit Yachts has approached customers and contacts about the possibility of sponsorship
- SY has spoken with MPs and ministers about the potential for more central government funding for the project. Tom Hunt MP has written to Secretary of State for Levelling-Up, Housing & Communities, Michael Gove, to request that DLUHC consider how they could further financially support the project.
- ABP has explored options about providing some additional match funding, but is unable to provide more towards the scheme than the agreed lease at peppercorn rent.
- Scoping other sites for the Academy – at the project board meeting on 27th November 23 SY suggested finding an alternative site for the Academy – one less costly to develop than Public Warehouse No1. ABP are reviewing other spaces that could be brought forward at lower cost, UoS has committed to reviewing land around their campus and IBC has committed to exploring its assets. In order to be affordable new sites would have to be offered at a peppercorn rent.

Progress in Establishing the Academic Model

UoS with SY and SNC have been working to develop the academic model. Creation of a not-for profit company is no longer under discussion – the training delivery model proposed is directly through UoS (maybe with SNC) potentially supplemented with “visiting professors” from SY or other businesses.

An apprenticeship model has been considered and discounted – there is no existing single standard for yacht building and to create and accredit a standard would take longer than the Towns Fund completion deadlines allow.

The work has since focused on a standard university financing model with fees capped at £9250 per year per learner. An outline set of modules at levels 4, 5 and 6 has been developed by SY and initially costed for delivery by UoS. Currently the financial model for delivery does not work due to high costs and relatively low expected learner numbers. To be viable the learner intake will need to exceed 150 learners per year (50 per level cohort) from day one to reach a break-even point.

Generally fees have not kept pace with costs and universities are making £2k to £4k loss per learner. For an untested course with the number of potential learners unclear it is likely the viability gap per learner will be significant without further action.

The next steps in the development of the model are:

- Market testing to gauge interest from learners and other employers
- Exploration of whether UoS costs can be reduced sufficiently through the use of “visiting professors” provided by SY at no cost to UoS.

- Exploration of how costs might be shared with other learning UoS programmes i.e. integrating Yacht Academy learners onto existing University courses for specific delivery modules.

Options

If the capital funding gap and/or the Academic model viability gap cannot be addressed by the March meeting there are several options to consider:

1. Reallocation of funds to other existing Towns Fund projects
 - Options for reallocation might be to projects facing budget pressures or where projects can deliver significantly more economic impact in Ipswich with additional resource.
 - If the Board decide to reallocate resources a Project Adjustment Request would need to be prepared and submitted to DLUHC for consideration. The turnaround time for a decision is within a month of submission.
2. Return funds to DLUHC
 - The Board would write to DLUHC and confirm that delivery is not possible but not propose reallocation to other projects
 - As there are projects that could benefit from allocation of additional funds or with funding gaps and as this does not benefit Ipswich it is not a recommended course of action.
3. Extend the date by which viability must be established
 - The Board could decide to give the project board more time to establish viability.
 - This option comes with risks – it is unlikely that the Academy could be designed, receive planning consent, works contractors procured and build completed in much less than 2 years unless a new site / more suitable building is identified.
 - Delivery could be accelerated slightly if a private sector partner took on the delivery role for the project from IBC (subject to grant agreement and Subsidy Control tests being met); this could speed up procurement of a works contractor.